

University of Massachusetts Boston
Guidelines for Graduate Assistants in Large Lectures

In response to new initiatives on campus that involve graduate students assisting in large lectures that may or may not be in their home departments, the Office of Graduate Studies and Office for Faculty Development have set guidelines for defining what this work may and may not consist of depending on the level of the graduate student. By proposing these guidelines, we hope to balance the needs of professors with the capacities of graduate students in order to maintain the highest quality of undergraduate experience. When faculty members interview and select graduate assistants for their lectures, they should consider the degree level and training of the assistants to determine their responsibilities.

The following guidelines are intended to support excellent learning experiences for both the undergraduates in large lectures and for the teaching assistants in them. A graduate assistant is, after all, also a student. We ask that a professor hiring an assistant think of him/herself as a mentor who will add value to the student's graduate degree through the guidance provided by the assistantship. In that spirit, we offer the following guidelines for doctoral and MA teaching assistants:

Doctoral students assisting in large lectures MAY:

- score tests/quizzes with multiple choice and true/false questions and short answers of a few sentences (disputes must be settled by instructor of record)
- grade lab reports using a detailed rubric
- provide preliminary feedback on drafts using a detailed rubric
- run discussion groups
- substitute for professor of record in emergencies and rare special circumstances
- tutor and hold conferences
- assist with copying and other course preparations
- proctor exams
- comment on and grade papers or essay exams using a detailed rubric
only if trained for the task and supervised by the professor

Doctoral students MAY NOT:

- be the final appeal for any course grades, rules or requirements

MA students assisting in large lectures MAY:

- score tests/quizzes with multiple choice and true/false questions and short answers of a few sentences (disputes must be settled by instructor of record)
- grade lab reports using a detailed rubric
- provide preliminary feedback on drafts of papers using a detailed rubric
- substitute for professor of record in emergencies or rare special circumstances
- tutor and hold conferences
- assist with copying and other course preparations
- proctor exams
- run discussion groups *only with detailed guidance from professor*

MA students assisting in large lectures MAY NOT:

- comment on or grade papers or essay exams*
- be the final appeal for any course grades, rules or requirements

***Exceptions may be made when an advanced MA student has relevant teaching experience and preparation through a department teacher-training program.**

Revised December 2015